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Federal award to aid U.S. 20

Moorland to Moville stretch funded

By BILL SHEA, Messenger staff writer
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Stimulus bill to pay for bridge

By BILL SHEA

Messenger staff writer

Federal stimulus money will help pay for rebuilding a bridge on a rural Webster County road.

State officials announced Thursday that a contract has been awarded for the work on the Webster County Road C66 bridge over North Lizard Creek.

Herberger Construction Co. Inc., of Indianola, was awarded a \$448,078.30 contract for the job.

Elsewhere in Webster County, money from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will also pay for repaving Iowa Highway 7. State officials previously reported that Fort Dodge Asphalt Co. submitted the low bid of \$5,366,999.01 for the job.

The federal law also gave Fort Dodge taxpayers a break on the financing for the new aquatic center. Thanks to a Build America Bonds provision in the law, the interest rate for the aquatic center bonds was reduced from 4 percent to 3.267 percent. That will reduce a projected property tax hike by about 14 cents per \$1,000 of taxable value.

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The federal government has awarded \$533,520 to continue making U.S. Highway 20 a four-lane route through northwestern Iowa.

The money is to be invested in the highway between the border of Calhoun and Sac counties and Merville in Woodbury County, according to the Federal Highway Administration. That stretch is part of the last remaining section of the highway that has not been expanded to four lanes.

U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley announced the award of the money Thursday.

"We're always excited that our Iowa congressional delegation realizes how important this U.S. 20 corridor is to the state of Iowa and continues to provide us with appropriations to complete the project," said Shirley Phillips, the president of the U.S. 20 Corridor Association.

Phillips said the association asked Grassley and U.S. Rep. Steve King, R-Kiron, for some additional money for the highway project last year. The \$533,520 was included in a gigantic spending bill that President Barack Obama signed in February.

U.S. Highway 20 crosses Iowa between Dubuque and Sioux City. It is being widened to four lanes in a process that has dragged on for nearly 40 years. Now, about 90 miles between Moorland in Webster County and Merville are all that remain to be expanded. All of those 90 miles are currently the subject of construction, surveying or design work.

Earthmoving between Moorland and Iowa Highway 4 near Rockwell City is nearing completion. The bridge near Moorland Pond is to be finished this fall.

The Iowa Department of Transportation is expected to award a contract for paving the four lanes between Moorland and Iowa Highway 4 this summer. A contract for earthmoving between Iowa Highway 4 and Sac County Road N14 is also expected to be awarded this summer.

"I've been waiting for the day that I could drive across Iowa on a four-lane Highway 20," Grassley, a Republican, said in a statement issued by his office. "This brings us one step closer to that."

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